

SURVEY THE TRASH IN YOUR TERRITORY



So you staked your claim. You've gotten input from your dream team about sustainable boundaries. You know what other groups are taking on and the history of trash in your territory. You know that you can make a difference. Now let's go out and find that trash!

Now you are in the field, on the ground hunting for clues as to where the trash is, what it is, why is it where you found it, who may have participated in getting it there, who may volunteer to get it out, how much trash is in your territory and more. You are creating surveys, maps and reports that will record all of this information so that you and your dream team can target activities to engage your sponsors and volunteers in cleaning it up. In time you will know how to keep all of this trash out of the ocean, creek, river, lake, shoreline, neighborhood, etc.

STEP ONE: GET YOUR MAP AND CHOOSE YOUR METHOD

There are two methods to target your starting cleanup points: 1) find the areas that you want to cleanup for example your front yards or the neighborhood parks or 2) find the most trashed areas, the hot spots. Both are good systems because either way you are being seen as you are picking up trash. In time you settle on a combo.

With both of these methods you need a map. I got these maps off the internet with a simple search on Google maps. Then using the print screen key, I copied the image into a Word document to add the grid lines. Once you have the map you are either marking it up with the places you want to cleanup or with the trash that you see.

STEP TWO: FIND THE HOT SPOTS OF TRASH IN YOUR TERRITORY

If you decide to clean up the most trashed areas first, then a synoptic survey will help you zero in on your trash hot spots. Synoptic surveys are super easy. 1) Draw grid lines on your map. 2) Drive, walk, boat, bike around your territory and 3) mark the trash on your map. At the end of the survey you'll have lots of marks on your map and you'll see quickly where your hot spots are located. You can color code them green, yellow, red which creates a priority system for cleaning up. You can split up your territory and share the work by handing out maps to several people. Just give some instruction first.



STEP THREE: SHARE YOUR DATA USING #ITSINTHEBAG

Your dream team of citizen scientists are creating a baseline of trash data and they should continue to update the maps for the length of the cleanup campaign. This data is very important to your work, for example you can use it to build activities, deploy your volunteers and create reports that you share with us #itsinthebag. When you build solid information collecting systems then many people can do the survey work and still maintain the integrity of the data. We can help.



Got more questions?

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